

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OFA-01 DLOS-04 L-03 ACDA-05 AGR-05

AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 ERDA-05 FEAE-00 FMC-01

TRSE-00 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 IO-10 JUSE-00 NSAE-00

NSC-05 NSF-01 OES-03 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 EUR-12 TAR-01 /127 W

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SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER ON CUBANS AND LOBSTER

REF: A) NASSAU 2077, B) STATE 292170

1. IN MONTHLY "CONTACT" RADIO PROGRAM DECEMBER 15, PORTIONS OF WHICH WE UNDERSTAND WILL BE TELEVISED IN MIAMI LATER THIS WEEK, PRIME MINISTER PINDLING RESPONDED AT LENGTH TO QUESTIONING ABOUT THE SPINY LOBSTER NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH HE TERMED "DEAD ISSUE," AND CUBAN FISHING.

2. CUBAN GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, HAS AGAIN ASKED FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON FISHING, BUT "NO DATE HAS BEEN SET." REFERRING TO RECENT APPREHENSION OF CUBAN POACHERS (REF A), PINDLING CLAIMED THAT, WITH ONSET OF GROUPER SEASON, GCOB EXPECTED TO FIND MANY CUBANS FISHING IN SOUTH ANDROS/CAY SAL VICINITY AND, THEREFORE, HAD POLICE BOAT IN THAT AREA. HE STRESSED THAT ALL OFFENDERS OF BAHAMIAN MARITIME RESOURCE

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LAWS "BE THEY CUBAN-AMERICANS OR CUBAN-CUBANS" WOULD BE

TREATED THE SAME.

3. AS TO ACTIVITIES OF CUBAN-AMERICAN FISHERMEN, HE CLAIMED THAT THEY HAVE BEEN ABSENT FROM THEIR NORMAL LOBSTERING AREAS BETWEEN ABACO AND CHUB CAY SINCE BREAKDOWN OF NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT, IN GENERAL, GCOB HAS EXPERIENCED FEWER PROBLEMS FROM THAT QUARTER THAN EXPECTED. GCOB EXPECTATIONS AFTER GOLDFINGER INCIDENT, HE ADDED, WERE FOR FULL-SCALE CAMPAIGN AGAINST BAHAMIAN SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT IN MIAMI. EXCEPT FOR BOMBS FOUND ABOARD ONE BAHAMASAIR AIRCRAFT, HOWEVER, THERE HAVE BEEN NO SERIOUS INCIDENTS AND PROSPECTS WERE NOW FOR EXTENDED "COLD WAR" IN POST-NEGOTIATION PERIOD.

4. TERMING THEM A "DEAD ISSUE" AS FAR AS HE IS CONCERNED, HE FORESAW NO EARLY REOPENING OF U.S.-GCOB SPINY LOBSTER TALKS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED OFFER IN EARLIER TALKS OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING, BOATS AND PROCESSING BUT SAID NEGOTIATIONS COULD NOT BE CONTINUED UNTIL TWO COUNTRIES COULD TALK AS EQUALS ABOUT THE MATTER. THIS INVOLVED, HE SAID, DEVELOPMENT OF BAHAMIAN FISHING AND LOBSTER INDUSTRIES TO POINT WHERE THEY COULD EXPLOIT THESE RESOURCES AT SAME LEVEL AS OUTSIDERS. IN AN ASIDE ABOUT NEW EEC MARKETS RESULTING FROM ABOLITION OF COMMONWEALTH PREFERENTIAL TARIFF, HE CLAIMED TO SEE VAST NEW EUROPEAN MARKET FOR BAHAMIAN LOBSTER, WITH NEW EXPORTS ACTING AS SPUR TO DEVELOPMENT OF THAT INDUSTRY.

5. IN A RELATED ITEM, DECEMBER 12 NASSAU GUARDIAN REPORTED THAT GCOB AMBASSADOR TO UN, L. B. JOHNSON, ALSO FIELDDED QUESTIONS ON CUBAN FISHING IN BAHAMIAN WATERS DURING VISIT TO ATLANTA, GEORGIA FIRST WEEK IN DECEMBER. ACCORDING TO ARTICLE, JOHNSON TOLD ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION THAT, "WHEN CASTRO ASKED US FOR FISHING RIGHTS (FIVE YEARS AGO), WE DENIED THE REQUEST BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT ESTABLISH A GOOD REASON WHY WE SHOULD LICENSE THEM." LATER, HE REPORTEDLY REITERATED TO SOUTHERN COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS AUDIENCE IN ATLANTA THAT THERE IS NO AGREEMENT WITH CUBA ALLOWING CUBANS TO FISH IN BAHAMIAN WATERS.

6. COMMENT: GCOB IS APPARENTLY WELL SENSITIZED TO FEELINGS OF U.S. FISHERMEN ABOUT EQUAL TREATMENT FOR CUBANS AND SEEMS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO BE ENGAGED IN EFFORT TO SOOTHE THOSE FEELINGS. QUESTION REMAINS, HOWEVER, HOW FAR GCOB CAN GO IN THIS EFFORT WITHOUT UNDULY RUFFLING CUBAN FEATHERS. IT ALSO REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW EFFECTIVE PINDLING TV PERFORMANCE WILL BE IN MIAMI. IN FACT, HIS REFERENCES TO LEVEL OF VIOLENCE NOT BEING UP TO EXPECTATIONS COULD BE RED FLAG IN FRONT OF VOLATILE CUBAN PAROLLEE FISHERMEN BASED IN MIAMI.

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